



The Journal

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Photo by MC3 William Phillips



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CNO Essay Contest: How Do You Think History Can Help Us Today?

By MC1 Eric Lockwood,
Naval History and Heritage Command
Communication and Outreach Division

“How can history inform our maritime strategy today?” Your answer to that question may be the basis for an entry in the Chief of Naval Operations 2017 Naval History Essay Contest, recently announced in NAVADMIN 024/17.

According to the message, CNO Adm. John Richardson directed the contest to further understanding of how lessons from history inform the Navy’s way ahead.

It should inspire “insight and dialog from across the widest spectrum of academic, operational, military and civilian personnel both from within the Naval Services and those with a sincere interest in the history of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.”

History’s impact on the modern age can be a pretty broad question, so essay entries should be able to cut across an enormous array of answers. Maybe Capt. John Paul Jones or Adm. Chester Nimitz’s leadership is inspirational as a model when discharging duties; or perhaps the successful effort, in the face of overwhelming odds, of the crew of guided-missile frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG 58) in saving their ship after it struck a mine is emboldening to hone damage control abilities.

But entrants don’t have to write about specific subjects like those. One can also think more strategically, such as how the Navy has projected power differently across time. Unintended consequences are also fair game. If it has to do with history, today and the sea services — write about it!

“We’re looking for subjects that study the history of the U.S. Navy, for sure, [as well as] any other historical, maritime history that relates to our maritime strategy,” said Cmdr. Ryan Ahler, Naval History and Heritage Command’s (NHHC) assistant director for the Director’s Action Group. “I think this is a really good opportunity for us to take a look at the long history of lessons learned and apply them to the present and how

we maintain maritime superiority.”

The essay contest is open to professional and amateur historians alike, whether they’re in the Navy or not, whether they’re U.S. citizens or not. Everyone has a voice and everyone will think of something different to write about which can help the Navy continue to be the best in the world. If thinking of a subject becomes a problem, NHHC’s website serves as a reference for interesting subjects and existing research.

“The Navy is really looking for entries from a full spectrum of writers, not just professional historians and people who do this for a living, but also for entries from those on the deckplates,” said Ahler. “The hardest part will be getting amateur historians and Sailors out in the fleet to submit, but honestly I think that’s where a lot of the best stuff will come from.”

If a little extra motivation is needed, winners will receive a monetary prize depending on where they place — \$5,000 for first place, \$2,500 for second, and \$1,500 for third. See the message for additional prizes: <https://go.usa.gov/xXaW7>.

The selections will be screened by the United States Naval Institute (USNI) and the finalists will be presented to a joint committee comprised of senior staff from USNI (1 person), the United States Naval Academy (1), the Naval War College (1), the Naval History and Heritage Command (1), the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (2), and one distinguished naval historian from outside the Navy.

Submissions cannot exceed 3,500 words (excluding footnotes/endnotes/sources), nor can an entry contain the author’s name. All submissions will be judged blindly, so in addition to the essay, a separate attachment including a biography and complete contact information is required. Submission packages should be emailed to essay@usni.org with the subject heading “CNO 2017 Naval History Essay Contest.”

For more details, see the NAVADMIN or go to www.usni.org/cnonhessaycontest. USNI’s point of contact in this matter is Fred Rainbow and he can be reached via phone at (410) 295-1092, and via email at frainbow@usni.org.

All entries are to be submitted no later than June 30. While the deadline is a few months away, it’s never too early to submit an entry.

Bethesda Notebook

WRNMMC Town Hall
Walter Reed National Military Medical Center’s monthly town halls will be March 14 at 7:30 a.m. in Clark Auditorium (Building 10) and at noon in Memorial Auditorium (Building 2). All WRNMMC staff members are encouraged to attend one of the meetings.

Women’s History Month
In observance of Women’s History Month, the Multicultural Committee at Walter Reed Bethesda is hosting a program March 17 at noon in Memorial Auditorium. This year’s theme for the observance is “Honoring Trailblazing Women Who Have Paved The Way for Future Generation.” Everyone is invited to attend the program. For more information, call Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Zu Yang, Multicultural Committee president, at 301-295-0638.

Colon Cancer Awareness
Every Tuesday and Thursday in March, staff of the Department of Radiology at Walter Reed Bethesda will be available to provide information about colon cancer and how you can prevent or treat it with healthy lifestyle choices, at a display table set up in Building 9, west mezzanine (by The Wedge) from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, contact Priscilla Cullen at 301-319-8876.

G-Lot Closing
G-Lot on Naval Support Activity Bethesda (across from the America Building) will be closing on March 20. All staff members with Red Parking Placards should park in Building 54 or Building 32 staff parking garages. Effective March 20, access to the Building 32 garage will require a coded Common Access Card (CAC) or proximity card to gain entry. Only staff members authorized a Red Parking Placard who do not have a proximity card or coded CAC should visit Building 102 (at Gate 1) between 5:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. (non-peak hours 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) to get this done. People with questions can contact OS1 Nathan Brown at 301-295-8942 (nathan.brown3.mil@mail.mil) or Lt. Joshua Beeler at 369-2499 (Joshua.d.beeler2.mil@mail.mil), or email dha.bethesda.wrnmmc.list.communications-team@mail.mil.

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NSA Bethesda NGIS Celebrates Two Years

By Andrew Damstedt
The Journal

Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS) celebrated its second year anniversary March 1 by recognizing its 28 employees who have served approximately 80,000 guests since the hotel's opening.

"People come here and they are put into your hands to be taken care of and you all do a fantastic job," said NSAB Commanding Officer Capt. Marvin L. Jones.

Since NGIS opened on March 1, 2015, there have been approximately 80,000 guests served, 58,000 room nights sold and \$4 million in revenue, according to Lynn Lawrence, NGIS-Bethesda general manager.

The lodgings are primarily for those who are classified as official duty travelers, but can also be used by those who are on vacation or retired military who want to stay over after a hospital visit.

NGIS Bethesda has 111 guestrooms, including standard and deluxe two-bedroom suites. The hotel has

maintained a 92 percent guest satisfaction rating, Lawrence said.

What has stood out for her in the two years, Lawrence said, is "the incredible diversity of people we have been fortunate enough to serve here at NGIS."

Kenneth Ball, NGIS housekeeping supervisor, was recognized as employee of the quarter at the March 1 celebration.

"Ken works extremely well under pressure with outstanding accuracy," Lawrence said. "He is reliable and willing to be flexible with scheduling to meet operational goals. He is quite capable of taking over when management is not available and handles work efficiently and effectively while still maintaining the highest quality."

Lawrence also presented certified housekeeper and custodial certifications to Calvin Dula, Maria Luisa Gonzalez and Susana Taramona; housekeeper and custodial recertifications to Maria Dolores Alvarenga, Maria Andrade, Eskedar Asefaw, Kathleen Gay, Hiwot Gebrihiwot, Khadima Hinton, Maria Isabel Orellana, and Joseph Sinohui; and a certified front desk facilitator



PHOTO BY MC3 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

NSAB Commanding Officer Capt. Marvin Jones speaks to workers at Navy Gateway Inns and Suites (NGIS) during the birthday celebration March 1. NGIS celebrated its second anniversary with recognition of its staff and cupcakes.

recertification to Tyler Davis.

"I want to encourage you to keep it up, take pride in what you do and know

that it really makes the difference and impacts the lives of people who come here to be your guests," Jones said.

Red Cross Volunteer of the Quarter Does What's Needed

By Kalila Fleming
WRNMMC Public Affairs

"Kind-hearted, selfless and compassionate" are the words that Red Cross Senior station manager at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Marin Reynes uses to describe the work ethic of Red Cross volunteer Wilma Clark.

The most recent recipient of the Walter Reed Bethesda Red Cross "Volunteer of the Quarter" honor, Clark was selected among 600 volunteers within the hospital. She is credited with volunteering more than 750 hours of service at WRNMMC since 2016.

"[Our volunteer leadership] choose a volunteer of the quarter who is to be recognized by the leadership here at Walter Reed [Bethesda]. Wilma's nomination came in and it was overwhelmingly chosen hands down by all the leadership team because she really is a staple of this office," Reynes said.

"No matter what it is, if I am short staffed, Wilma is raising her hand to help and stay a little bit later than she normally does. She is always willing to help, even [with] the smallest project," Reynes added.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIN REYNES

American Red Cross volunteers (from left) Gloria Roman, Rosalie Kagan and Wilma Clark hold some holiday cards and letters written to wounded warriors, their families and Walter Reed Bethesda staff members which are distributed to service members by the volunteers during the holiday season. Clark was recently chosen as the volunteer of the quarter.

Clark has volunteered more than 14 years here, prior to the integration of the former National Naval Medical Center and former Walter Reed Army Medical Center which formed WRNMMC.

"I've always liked being in a hospital [setting], and when I was in high school I was a volunteer for the Red Cross at the Washington Hospital Center; I was one of the first volunteers there," Clark said. "When I retired, I had said

I wanted to give back to society," she added.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Clark volunteers in WRNMMC's Immunization and Allergy clinic where she assists at the front desk answering phones, greeting patients and performing other supporting functions.

"I just make sure that everybody is checked in, has all their paperwork, and are ready to be seen by their provider," Clark said.

"On Wednesday, [Clarks] takes the Red Cross Comfort Cart around the hospital filling any needs our patients and their family members may have from toiletries, to clothing, to entertainment items. [She] even served as leader of the comfort cart for more than a year," Reynes explained.

"In addition to all of these duties, Monday through Thursday Wilma pulls double duty as part of a command initiative by picking up menus from the Murtha Cancer Center, and delivering them to [Café 8901]. She picks up meals and delivers them to the Murtha Cancer Center. This ensures that patients receiving treatment for more than six hours are provided a meal," Reynes added.

"Wilma has seen a lot. She has been here a long time. There has been a lot that has happened in this hospital and although times are changing, there is still the same kind of support that we are able to provide and a strong volunteer base that has compassion and will to support the families however they can. That's what we look for, that's what Wilma does," Reynes continued.

"It's very rewarding and I always feel that if there's anything that has to be done, if I can, I will do it," Clark said.

4th Annual Kayak Football

Photos by MC3 William Phillips

Ramrod 2 beat Calavar, 3-1, winning the championship game of the 4th Annual Kayak Football Tournament in Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Fitness Center pool March 4. Eight teams participated in the event, playing 14 games.



MWR Hosts Character Breakfast

Photos by MC3 William Phillips

Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Morale Welfare and Recreation hosted a Character Brunch March 4 at the Warrior Cafe for children to meet their favorite characters.



Navy Lodge Bethesda's GM Recognized as Latina Leader

By Andrew Damstedt
The Journal

Naval Support Activity Bethesda's Navy Lodge general manager recently represented the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) at a ceremony in Arlington honoring companies that help Latinas with career growth and advancement.

"This is particularly impactful to me as a Latina," said Anna Herrera-Ruiz, Navy Lodge Bethesda general manager. "I am honored that NEXCOM is being honored as an organization by Latina Style. This is a high achievement and I'm certain that many talented and skilled NEXCOM Latinas will feel a great sense of pride for this recognition and I am thrilled to represent them."

NEXCOM was one of 50 companies recognized by Latina Style that promote growth opportunities for Latinas in their organization.

"It's part of NEXCOM culture to create opportunities for growth and career advancement for all associates at all levels," Herrera-Ruiz said.

She said she was grateful to represent NEXCOM which ranked 45th among major businesses that also made the magazine's list.

"It's given me a voice to speak for the



PHOTO COURTESY ANA HERRERA-RUIZ

Navy Lodge Bethesda General Manager Ana Herrera-Ruiz, holding award, represented Navy Exchange Service Command at an awards event Feb. 9 in Arlington honoring companies that promote growth opportunities for Latinas. Also, from left to right, NEXCOM Command Master Chief Shannon Howe; Christina Kepa CEO's Council for Diversity Chairperson; G.B. Marlow, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer Director Workforce Diversity & Associate Engagement NEXCOM Enterprise; and Robert J. Bianchi, Chief Executive Officer Navy Exchange Service Command.

thousands of Hispanics working for NEXCOM. I feel very proud," Herrera-Ruiz said.

She has worked with the company for 16 years and became Navy Lodge Bethesda's general manager in 2012. Previously, she worked as the general manager at Joint Base Anacostia-

Bolling Navy Lodge and has managed Navy Lodges in Atsugi, Japan; Bangor, Washington; Memphis, Tennessee; San Diego and North Island, California.

"Having spent a great deal of time in the field at our Navy Lodges worldwide and having had the opportunity to meet and get to know so many talented

Latinas, it is truly exciting to watch these wonderful women thrive in their careers over time and be recognized for their accomplishments," she said.

Herrera-Ruiz said she is proud that NEXCOM encourages diversity.

"I know firsthand that women, including fellow Latinas, are given opportunities to develop skills and advance in senior leadership roles," she said.

Herrera-Ruiz said she shares her experience with other Hispanic women so they can see that they have the same opportunities as others.

She promotes diversity at work through events that show how Latin culture embodies NEXCOM core values. Throughout her career, she's organized 11 Navy Lodge Diversity events and developed performance requirement plans as well as housekeeping, guest services, and maintenance check lists in English, Spanish and Japanese.

She also said it is important to have a diverse workforce at the Navy Lodge.

"It's the only way that we're going to understand our guests, because they come from a diverse background as well," she said. "It's important for them to speak and to check-in at Navy Lodge and find people that can speak their languages and understand their backgrounds."



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Social Workers ‘Stand Up’ For All

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs

Social workers from throughout the Walter Reed Bethesda community began their month-long observance of National Professional Social Work Month with a day-long forum on March 2 at the medical center.

Topics discussed during the forum touched on a number of issues social workers tackle to help people meet their challenges and build stronger communities. These include individuals who may be experiencing devastating illnesses and mental health crises, veterans, children, families and communities. This is how “Social Workers Stand Up” for those in need, which is also the theme for this year’s observance.

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Director Army Col. Michael S. Heimall opened the forum welcoming those in attendance and explaining Social Work Month began in March 1963. In 1984, Congress along with the White House officially recognized the month-long observance after a joint resolution introduced by Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii and Rep.

Edolphus Towns of New York, made its way to the White House and was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan.

“[The observance is] a great way to honor a profession that does so much,” Heimall said. He challenged social workers, along with the entire WRNMMC staff, to continue to lead the way in moving military medicine, as well as American medicine, forward.

Pointing out that WRNMMC has the only Child and Family Social Work Fellowship Program in the nation, as well as the impact social workers have made with service members and their families in the Warrior Transition Brigade, Heimall explained social workers provide invaluable services throughout the medical center, one of which is helping to identify and manage behavioral health issues.

“When you come to a medical center like Walter Reed Bethesda and you see the complexity of the illnesses and injuries of the people we’re privileged to provide care, you gain a deeper appreciation for what social workers bring to the table,” Heimall continued.

“If you really want to impact health care in America, you have



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Army Lt. Col. Ronald Whalen, Ph.D., a licensed social worker explained social workers embedded within units, especially those deployed, serve as advocates for individual service members, their families, and the unit in general.

to get at all those social issues that impact health status,” he added. This involves managing patients across the continuum of their care and meeting all of the factors affecting their health – physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially.

Following Heimall’s welcome, Army Maj. (Dr.) Jason M. Blaylock, an infectious diseases physician at WRNMMC, discussed HIV, treatment options and key principles for prescribing PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis, which is a way for people who do not have HIV but who are at substantial risk of getting it, to prevent HIV infection by taking a pill every day.

Blaylock said social workers “are the backbone of the care we provide [many] of our patients. A lot of you are embedded in our subspecialty clinics and even on the surgical side.” He added “to realize the potential benefits of PrEP, we need to address awareness by those at risk for HIV infection, [and] educate providers on recognizing the risk and linking patients to PrEP services. Social workers are important in this effort, he explained.

Army Lt. Col. Ronald Whalen, Ph.D., and a licensed social worker, agreed, adding social workers embedded within units, especially those deployed, serve as advocates for individual service members and their families. Whalen, who has deployed twice to Iraq, explained social workers are the vital links between individuals and commanders in helping to assess the behavioral and mental health status of service members and the unit.

For some service member back from deployments and receiving care at WRNMMC assigned to the

WTB, “their journey of getting better is going to be life-long,” said Col. Christopher Boyd, commander of the WTB, National Capital Region. Helping them with that journey is the WTB Social Work staff. Sandra C. Loader, senior social worker within the WTB, NCR, explained her staff, along with the WTB multidisciplinary team, stands up for Soldiers within the unit through six domains: career; physical; emotional; social; family; and spiritual. The emotional, social, family and spiritual domains are primarily managed by the Social Work members.

Boyd explained the WTB and its social workers are focused on helping Soldiers in the unit transition from WRNMMC either back into the force, or as productive members of the civilian community. “The social work team plays an integral role [in this effort],” he added.

Loader explained social workers assist Soldiers in “approaching life’s challenges in a positive, optimistic way by demonstrating self-control, stamina and good character with [their] choices and actions.” In addition, social workers encourage Soldiers to “develop and maintain trusted, valued relationships and friendships.” WTB social workers also stress the importance of families in the healing and transition of the service members, ensuring they have adequate resources to be supportive and secure a healthy environment after transitioning.

Standing up for children is also an important function of social workers, explained licensed social workers Laura Smith and Elaine Richardson-Dalzell. Smith said social workers serve as advocates, therapists, educators, child welfare workers, case managers, care coordinators, as well as work within the juvenile justice system to support children in need.

Family Advocacy Program victim advocate at Walter Reed Bethesda, Lawanda Dezurn, who is also a social worker, explained family violence is an issue not only affecting individual families, but the entire community, as well as military readiness. She explained the FAP is focused on prevention and intervention in child and spouse abuse to protect victims, hold offenders accountable, help families and promote readiness. FAP services include 24/7 crisis response and intervention, domestic violence education, safety planning, advocacy, and emotional support. For more information, call 301-319-4087. After hours, call the command duty officer at 301-538-2843.

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Achieving A Nutrition Resolution

By Army 2nd Lt. Kelly Schaad
WRNMMC Dietetic Intern

At the start of each year, 40 to 50 percent of adults seek to better themselves by setting a New Year's resolution. Achieving weight loss, improving health, and increasing physical fitness are consistently the most popular resolutions. Despite best intentions, studies show that a high number of resolutions are abandoned within the first week.

While it may be difficult to stay motivated meeting your resolution after the fireworks have ended, it is far from impossible. Luckily, there are many tools available to help make achieving success easier.

National Nutrition Month is annually observed during March. The theme for 2017, "Put Your Best Fork Forward," serves as a reminder of the many tools available to help make informed nutrition choices. Briefly outlined below are resources that can help anyone put their "Best Fork Forward."

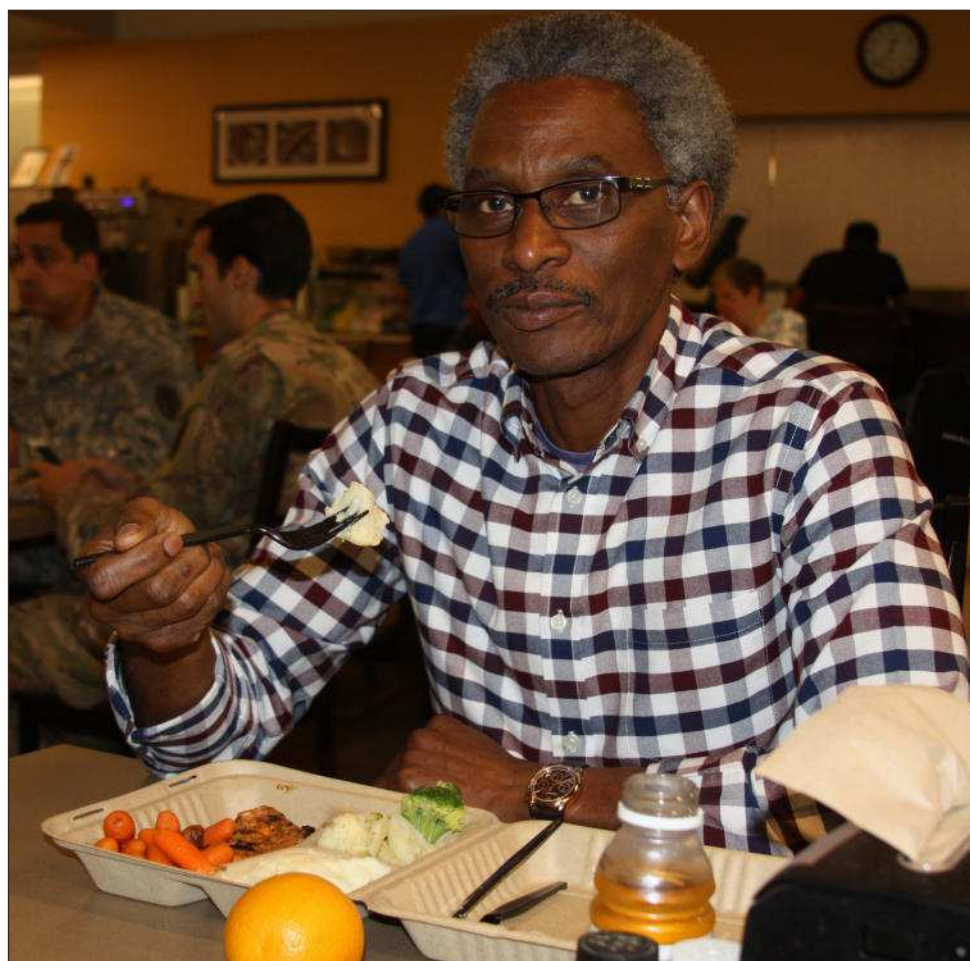
An excellent way to begin tackling a New Year's resolution is by formulating a specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goal. Having a well-formulated goal can positively impact success. The next step is to follow credible nutrition recommendations. An easily

accessible reference is the Nutrition Facts label found on the packaging for most food items. The label provides information about the serving size, total calories and the number of calories per serving. For information concerning understanding a Nutrition Facts Label, you can visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' website at www.fda.gov.

One online tool the U.S. Department of Agriculture provides is SuperTracker, which helps plan and analyze diet and physical activity. A useful component of the SuperTracker tool is Food Tracker, which provides a calorie and nutrient estimate based on food items entered. Other useful tools available from the same website include a BMI calculator, nutrition quizzes, and recipes. The website is located at <https://www.supertracker.usda.gov>.

The resources provided in this article do not represent a complete list of available nutrition and fitness tools. There are many additional resources available to assist in achieving a nutrition related goal, but when searching for information, be sure to consider the website ownership, the purpose of the information being provided, any affiliations or credentials, and the source of any listed references.

Remember to be SMART, start small and develop goals further as progress is made.



WRNMMC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Lynn Johnson, who works in Preventive Medicine at Walter Reed Bethesda, says he maintains his well-being and balance with good nutrition, exercise, prayer and relaxing to music. "I eat to live, not live to eat," he says.

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Walter Reed Bethesda Observes Ash Wednesday

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public Affairs

The Archbishop for the Military Services, USA, Timothy P. Broglio began Lent at Walter Reed Bethesda with the placing ashes on the foreheads of worshippers who attended the medical center's annual Ash Wednesday Mass on March 1 in Memorial Auditorium.

For many who've been associated with Walter Reed Bethesda over the years, attending the medical center's Ash Wednesday Mass has become a tradition, said Army Col. Michael S. Heimall, director of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. He added Lent is devoted to fasting, prayer and rededication to one's faith. "I hope all in the Walter Reed Bethesda community the best during this period of rededication to our commitments and faiths," he continued.

Broglio has led the Ash Wednesday Mass at WRNMMC for the last five years.

Pope John Paul II created the position of Archbishop for the Military Service in 1985, and on Nov. 19, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Broglio to the assignment, making him the fourth Archbishop for Military Services. Broglio was formally installed in the position on Jan. 25, 2008 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

The Archdiocese for the Military Services, which the archbishop leads, provides the Catholic Church's pastoral ministries and spiritual services to those in the U.S. Armed Forces. This includes individuals at more than 220 installations in 29 countries, patients in 153 Veterans Affairs medical centers, and federal employees

serving outside the boundaries of the United States in 134 countries. Numerically, the AMS is responsible for more than 1.8 million men, women and children.

In his Ash Wednesday homily at Walter Reed Bethesda this year, Broglio said to the medical staff and its beneficiaries, "The wounded and the ill do indeed minister to those who retain [their health]. They teach us the value of good health [and] elicit [our] compassion, [calling upon us] to serve the needs of a sister or brother."

The archbishop then quoted Pope Francis from his Lenten message, reiterating, "Other persons are a gift. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons [for good deeds] and change."

Broglio called Lent "a favorable season for opening the doors to all of those in need. Each life we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love."

Lent is a season for change and renewal, symbolized by the ashes from palms burned from last year's Palm Sunday and placed as a cross on the foreheads of those who attend Ash Wednesday services, the archbishop explained.

"Lent is the time the Lord calls us to enter more deeply into a relationship with him," he continued. "Now is the time to accept that invitation."

He added the ashes also serve as a reminder that "this earthly life... will past away. We will return to the earth from which we were fashioned."

"Those same ashes, however, also signifies our ability to change, to grow, [change] and to draw ever nearer to the Lord who empowers us," Broglio said. He added this growth should not be limited to the Lenten season.

"Today, we are charged to be good ambassadors...to make known [to others] the one who has sent us, and make his characteristics known and appreciated," Broglio said.

Lent is prayer, pertinence, sacraments and increased charity, he added. "It is the path that will prepare us well for the celebration of the Easter victory over sin and death."

In addition to special services, WRNMMC's Department of Pastoral Care offers daily mass and services for religions of various denominations, as well as patient and family visitation. For more information, call 301-295-1510.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Archbishop of the Military Services, USA, Timothy P. Broglio places ashes on the foreheads of worshippers attending the Ash Wednesday Catholic Mass at Walter Reed Bethesda on March 1.

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Women’s History Month: Making WAVES in the U.S. Navy

By Donna Cipolloni
NAS Patuxent River Public Affairs

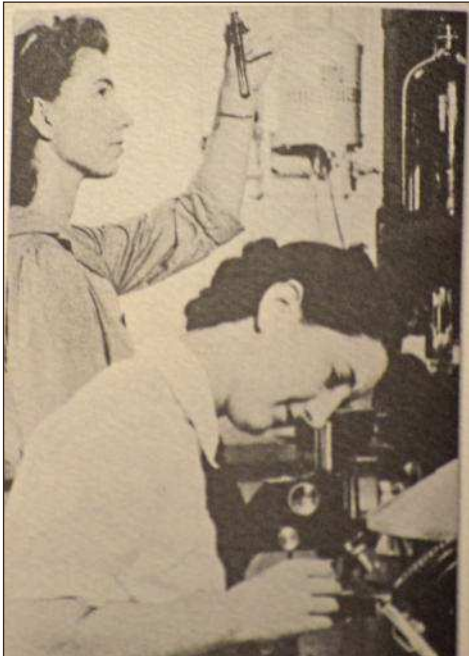
Following the last of the Yeomen (F) leaving active duty at the end of World War I, only a small number of Navy nurses represented their gender in naval service, but World War II would change all of that. In the early 1940s, the Navy prepared not only to accept a large number of enlisted women, but also the first female commissioned officers who would supervise them.

On July 30, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Navy Women’s Reserve Act into law creating what was commonly known as the WAVES — Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service — a division of the U.S. Navy created during World War II to free up male personnel for sea duty.

Little did anyone know that the resulting influx of females in the U.S. Navy would last far beyond the World War II “emergency” for which they had been recruited.

In August 1942, Mildred McAfee, president of Wellesley College, was sworn in as a Naval Reserve lieutenant commander and became the first female officer in U.S. Navy history, as well as the first director of the WAVES.

Serving at Patuxent River, Maryland One of those WAVES was Alice Virginia Benzie, originally from Brookville, NY, who served at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, then



Originally intended to fill clerical jobs, thousands of WAVES went on to train and work in scientific and technical fields including meteorology, radar operations, communications and air traffic control, among many others.

known as the U.S. Naval Air Test Center. She entered the service on Nov. 4, 1943 at the age of 21 and was honorably discharged on July 18 [exact year unknown], having achieved the rank of Chief Yeoman.

In 2014, a personal photo album of Benzie’s from her time at Pax River surfaced on eBay and was purchased

Women’s milestones

- 1908 Women officially began serving in the Navy (nurses)
- 1917 Enlistment of women authorized in World War I as Yeoman (F)
- 1918 After WWI most women were released from naval service
- 1942 Congress established the Navy’s Women’s Reserve Program, aka the WAVES
- 1943 Women allowed to hold the rank of Captain
- 1948 President Harry Truman signed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act making it possible for women to enter the Navy in regular or reserve status
- 1959 First female Master Chief
- 1967 Ceiling of 2 percent eliminated for enlisting women
- 1972 First female naval officer appointed to flag rank
- 1973 Supreme Court rules equal benefits for dependents of military women
- 1973 Mandatory separation for pregnancy abolished
- 1975 Women admitted to U.S. Naval Academy and Aviation Officer Candidate School
- 1979 Naval Flight Officer program opened to women
- 1980 U.S. Naval Academy graduated its first female officers
- 1982 First Navy instruction issued on sexual harassment, including definition, enforcement and training required
- 1993 Combat Exclusion Law rescinded by Congress, all ships and squadrons open to women
- 1993 Congress passed law allowing women to fly combat aircraft
- 2011 First female officers reported onboard submarines
- 2013 Elimination of the 1994 Direct Combat Definition and Assignment Rule
- 2016 All military occupations and positions opened to women, without exception

by Mike Smolek, NAS Patuxent River cultural resources manager. The album was full of old photos showing her with other WAVES and some of the many Sailors who once served here in the installation’s earliest years, when the nation was embroiled in World War II.

Alice Virginia Benzie Dowden died in Williamsburg, Va., on Oct. 27, 2009.

She had been a longtime employee of Long Island University, retiring as executive assistant to the president. She was married for over 61 years to John B. Dowden and had one son.

The photographs she collected while at Pax River help tell the tale of the many women who answered their nation’s call and paved the way for today’s modern woman Sailor.



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